

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

APRIL 18, 1848.

Submitted, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Rusk made the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. No. 226.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the "memorial of Robert C. Rogers, praying indemnity for losses and expenses incurred during his captivity in Mexico, and in effecting his escape," have had the same under consideration, and respectfully report:

It appears that the memorialist, passed Midshipman Rogers, of the United States navy, whose captivity and sufferings, as a prisoner in Mexico, have excited such universal sympathy throughout the country, was taken prisoner in the month of December, 1846, whilst engaged in the performance of his duty, as an officer, with the usual evidences of his professional character about his person, and committed to close confinement. His captors, affecting to regard him as a spy, determined, at first, to treat him as such, and, had it not been that the military authorities of Mexico did not agree to the justice of the sentence passed upon him by a civil tribunal, before which he underwent a formal trial, would have been subjected to the ignominious fate allotted to persons found acting in that capacity. It further appears that, during a captivity of eight months, the memorialist was exposed to the greatest hardships and privations, being allowed no means of subsistence by the Mexican government, and having been robbed of every thing he procured, through the kindness of sympathizing friends, on no less than three different occasions. While the memorialist was in captivity, the brig "Somers," the vessel to which he was attached at the time of his capture, foundered in the preservation of the blockade of Vera Cruz, by which casualty he lost all the little property he had left on board, and was reduced to entire poverty. During the long term of his imprisonment, Passed Midshipman Rogers was obliged to obtain the means of supporting his wretched existence from the bounty of those whose feelings of humanity prompted them to aid him in his forlorn condition, or from any little credit which he might have in borrowing money. Finally,

having ascertained* that his captors intended to send him further into the interior of the country, and place him in close confinement, the memorialist determined to make a vigorous effort to escape, in which he fortunately succeeded, and was enabled to join his countrymen, and become a participator in the glorious exploits in the neighborhood of Mexico, which have conferred everlasting honor on the name of American soldier.

Such is, in brief, the narrative of the vicissitudes and sufferings to which this gallant young officer has been subjected, and which, in the opinion of this committee, richly entitle him to the indemnification which he now asks at the hands of his country. But, independently of the obligation which has thus been incurred on the part of the government, it is deemed proper here to advert to the sound policy of fostering, in the hearts and minds of those who are engaged in the public military service of the nation, a devotion to country, by giving them full assurance that they will always find that country ready and willing, not only to protect them against losses sustained in the discharge of their duty, but to compensate them, liberally, for their exposure of life and liberty in her cause.

Your committee, therefore, think that the prayer of the memorialist is just, and should be granted, and recommend the passage of the accompanying bill.